

INTER OFFICE MEMO

TO: Marketing, Planning & Legislative Committee

DATE: November 24, 2020

FROM: Rick Ramacier
General Manager



SUBJECT: Potential State Legislation on Bay Area Transit Governance or Coordination

Background

During the 2020 state legislative session, Assembly Member David Chiu introduced and then subsequently pulled from consideration, AB2057. This legislation would – among other things – have created a state Blue Ribbon Task Force (BRTF) on Bay Area transit governance, funding, and coordination. This BRTF would have included state legislators, Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) members, and other related “stake holders”. It would have been tasked with developing a significant plan to likely change how transit in the Bay Area is funded and governed. The main interest in this effort was to build a better regional system, possibly at the expense of local transit services. The initial reaction of the suburban East Bay legislative delegation could be described as positive. This was despite the potential for this legislation to be damaging to local transit interests.

After AB2057 was pulled from consideration, MTC set up its own Task Force to look at similar issues. Assembly Member Chiu was named to the MTC led MTC Transit Recovery Task Force (MTC BRTF). The MTC BRTF has met five times and is scheduled to meet seven more times. However, Assembly Member Chiu has already sent strong signals that he intends to introduce a bill very similar to AB2057 in the 2021 legislative session in January of 2021.

It is likely that this new bill could pose concerns for County Connection and other local transit operators within the region.

County Connection Response

Given that this likely effort by Assembly Member Chiu could pose a significant challenge for County Connection, staff believes we should proactively respond prior to a bill being introduced. Specifically, we should:

- 1.) Schedule a series of meetings with our state legislative delegation to discuss the prospects of Assembly Member Chiu introducing a new bill like AB2057 and the challenges this will pose to local suburban transit. These meetings are to be held in December prior to the legislature going into session in January. They would be held remotely due to COVID-19 and ideally will include one or two County Connection board members with key staff.
- 2.) Develop pieces for our state legislative delegation that highlight how efficient we are relative to larger agencies, that highlight how we coordinate with BART in terms of bus schedules and BART train schedules, that highlight how the four suburban East Bay bus operators are acting as one for everything to do with Clipper Card – including fare schedules, etc., and that highlight other projects like the one-seat paratransit ride the four agencies now provide.

- 3.) Develop pieces showing simple examples of how this legislation could jeopardize our ability to provide school trippers, specific local services serving transit dependent people, and our ability to respond to housing growth within our service area. Many of these services are being used by transit dependent people who live in our communities.
- 4.) Begin to work with our delegation on how they can effectively steer any legislation in the realm of AB2057 toward a result that is not problematic for central country residents that require vital local transit service.
- 5.) Show that better regional transit service has to be tied to improved and new funding for those services and not come out of the funding that currently goes to local transit systems that use existing funds to meet well established local needs.

Reaching Out to Other Partners

County Connection should consider reaching out to other neighboring local transit agencies to form a coalition on working to ensure that an AB2057 like bill emerges as something that we can live with. This could include WestCAT, Tri-Delta Transit, and LAVTA. We should engage the Contra Costa Transportation Authority (CCTA) and Contra Costa County as well as interested city councils. We should provide these organizations with the materials referenced above and ask them to speak to our state legislative delegation as well.

Action Requested

Staff seeks your feedback, questions, and suggestions on the approaches outlined above. We further seek your concurrence on conducting these meetings and outreach. We ask that you send this report to the full board for their awareness.